

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Old Colony Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

407 South Dearborn Street, corners of Van Buren and Plymouth

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

VICINITY OF

7th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Illinois

CODE

17

COUNTY

Cook

CODE

031

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

___STRUCTURE

___SITE

___OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

___BOTH

___PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___IN PROCESS

___BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

___UNOCCUPIED

___WORK IN PROGRESS

___ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

___NO

PRESENT USE

___AGRICULTURE

☒ COMMERCIAL

___EDUCATIONAL

___ENTERTAINMENT

___GOVERNMENT

___INDUSTRIAL

___MILITARY

___MUSEUM

___PARK

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___RELIGIOUS

___SCIENTIFIC

___TRANSPORTATION

___OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

National Boulevard Bank Trust #1743, Doc. No. 19631434

STREET & NUMBER

410 North Michigan Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

VICINITY OF

STATE

Illinois

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cook County Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

228 North LaSalle Street

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

STATE

Illinois

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1960; 1964

☒ FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

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Illinois Historic Structures Survey (state)

1972

Department of Conservation

605 State Office Building

Springfield, Illinois

Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural
Landmarks (local)

1972

320 North Clark Street, Room 800

Chicago, Illinois

Landmarks Preservation Council and Service (local)

1974

407 South Dearborn

Chicago, Illinois

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

ORIGINAL CONDITION

A seventeen story office building with one basement, it is supported by a skeletal structure resting on spread footings and beam grillage, except along the south end where the south party wall is carried on cantilevers from the second column line which is on caissons to hard pan. The vertical members in the framework are wrought iron Phoenix columns, and the horizontal girders and beams are steel. Wind bracing is provided by portal bracing, the outline of which is visible on the walls of many of the building's offices.

The frame provides the entire support for the building; there are no bearing walls.

The building is sheathed in Bedford limestone on the first three floors and, above, by gray brick and sparse, gray terra cotta. The facades on South Dearborn (west) and Plymouth Court (east) are identical. The south facade is unfinished.

The lower three floors constitute a base, with the third floor capping the first two floors. The second floor contains large Chicago windows. Each of the three street facades has an arched, two-story entrance in the center. The north (Van Buren) one, originally the main entrance, featured two free-standing columns.

The three story motive of the bottom is repeated at the top, with a two story colonnade running along the fifteenth and sixteenth stories, and a cornice (still intact) crowning the seventeenth.

At each corner from the third story through to the cornice is an oriel that bulges out from the face of the building, giving the structure a massive, sculptural effect.

Within the span between the corner bulges on the east and west facades, thin piers rise from the third through the fourteenth floors along the plane defined by the outer surface of the oriels. This produces a vertical emphasis along these long facades. Within each bay is set a pair of double hung windows that are the same size as those in the oriels, providing continuity of rhythm across the face and around the corners.

On the north facade there are no vertical piers. Instead, the span between the bulges is given a distinct horizontal emphasis by setting a Chicago window in the center of each floor with a single double hung window flanking it on each side. This treatment gives a horizontal emphasis to this narrow facade which contrasts with the vertical emphasis given the east and west facades by the vertical piers.

The lobby, originally open from three sides, had two stairs leading to the important second floor with a bank of open cage elevators along its east side. The upper tenant floors were

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finished with mosaic and marble floors, marble wainscoating, and rich woods.

PRESENT CONDITION

In 1947 hard pan caissons were introduced along the west column line.

The facade, including the cornice, remains intact, as do many of the corridors and offices.

The major alterations have been on the ground floor. The Van Buren entrance has been converted into a shop, but the columns flanking the original entrance are doubtless encased within the shop front. The lobby's original surfaces have all been replaced, the open cages of the elevators in the lobby have been enclosed, and the original stairs from the lobby to the second floor have been reduced to a single one located between the split bank of elevators.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☒ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☒ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		Urban Planning

SPECIFIC DATES 1893-94

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Holabird & Roche

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building is significant for four reasons: the general excellence of its design, its unique illustration of a formerly rather common building type, the character of its structural system, and its contribution to the architectural and urban quality of the district of which it is a part.

It is one of several buildings produced in this period by the important architectural firm of William Holabird (1854-1923) and Martin Roche (1855-1927). Among their designs it is unique. As Chicago School architects, they sought to reveal the character of the skeletal structure while cladding their buildings with an appropriate surface. Here the framework is revealed by the piers on the east and west facades, and the strong horizontals on the north facade, as well as by the strong cornices above the second, third, fourth, sixth, eighth, tenth, twelfth, fourteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth floors. The design's unity derives from the repetition of Chicago windows along the second floor and in the center of the north facade, and of double hung windows elsewhere above the second floor. The unity is strengthened by the repetition of the division of the first three floors in that of the last three floors. Variety is found in the contrast between the horizontal stress of the narrow north facade and the distinct vertical thrust of the long east and west facades. The sparing use of detail allows these predominately architectonic design elements to gain their full effect. The design, then, is one of subtle contrasts and complements between the skeletal structure and the frame, and the narrow and long facades, all given vigor by the great bulbous corners.

Slab-like buildings with bulging corners were formerly a relatively common building type in Chicago and elsewhere, but this is the single surviving example of the type used for a commercial office building in Chicago, and the single surviving example of the type in the central area of the city. Lost are other Loop examples, most of which were by Burnham and Root: for example, their Great Northern Hotel (1890-92), Ashland Block (1891-92), and Majestic Hotel (1892-93), among others. Some hotels, smaller in size and located at some distance from the Loop, also had bulging

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corners: C. J. Warren's Metropole Hotel, 1891, Michigan Hotel, 1891-92, and destroyed Plaza Hotel, 1892; and Theodore Starrett's destroyed Hyde Park Hotel, 1887-91, among others. The only other time Holabird and Root used the type was in the much smaller, near-north side apartment building, the McConnell Apartments, at 1210 North Astor Street. It is fortunate that the Old Colony is the lone surviving Loop, commercial example because it is the best-designed of the group.

The building has no structural walls, either load bearing or bracing. At the time of its construction, Phoenix columns were a common structural element, but the steel floor members were innovative, and the portal bracing was apparently invented here. By having the plaster of the interior partitions follow the line of the portal bracing, a structural expedient was turned to architectural advantage. Corydon T. Purdy was responsible for those structural elements, while William Sooy Smith solved the problems of the south party wall with the then unfamiliar technique of using caissons and cantilevers.

The slab building is a part of the south Loop thin slab district where it forms a unity with other buildings of this period--Holabird and Roche's Pontiac Building (1891), Burnham and Root's and Holabird and Roche's Monadnock Block (1889-93), Burnham and Co.'s Fisher Building (1895-96), and William LeBaron Jenney's Manhattan Building (1889-91) being among the most prominent. The Old Colony, with its strong horizontal and vertical elements and distinctive bulbous corners, forms an essential element in this assemblage. Indeed, it suggested the name for Plymouth Court, one of the north-south streets in the district. Francis Bartlett of Boston financed the building and provided its name, and from that came the complementary name of the street.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Carl Condit. The Chicago School of Architecture, Chicago, 1964.

F.A. Randall. History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago, Urbana, 1949.

Hugh C. Miller, The Chicago School of Architecture, National Park Service, Washington, 1973.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 447820 164636030

ZONE EASTING

NORTHING

B

ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

C

D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

STATE OF ILL. LAND AREA OF THE PROPERTY IS LESS THAN ONE ACRE. THE PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN THE CITY OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. THE PROPERTY IS A REMAINING PORTION OF A TRACT OF LAND WHICH WAS PART OF THE CHICAGO SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE. THE PROPERTY IS A REMAINING PORTION OF A TRACT OF LAND WHICH WAS PART OF THE CHICAGO SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carroll William Westfall

ORGANIZATION

Landmarks Preservation Council

DATE

August 1, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

407 South Dearborn

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Chicago

STATE

Illinois

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

William F. Dean

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

10-8

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 10-8-1975

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER